

[Mail Day]

On waking next morning Kathie slipped out of bed, ran over to the window, shook her hair back from her face, and leaned out. 'Good morning sea, sky, trees, earth, blessed little island' she said, 'for today the Mail comes in.' She sat on the window sill, her eyes half closed, a smile playing over her face, and thought 'How many years I have waited. How the days have begun and ended, the long days, and never a word about him, and the life here flowed on, and now it is Mail Day.' 'O, Expectation, Expectation' she cried aloud, her voice eager and high, and every pulse in her body beating with excitement. 'I feel [as] though my heart has run up a big flag and it's blowing inside me.' She dressed very slowly. 'My old green linen' she said, pulling it out joyfully. 'Souvenir d'Angleterre. I shall write an Orchestral Fantasia on that.' Two roses for the front of her blouse. She ran out into the garden – her heart suffocated her. She wished that there were great thorns on the bushes to tear her hands. 'I want a big physical sensation' she said, and then she ran back to her room and looked at herself in the long glass. The same Kathie of so long ago – but yet not the same. (pp32–33)

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*What You Please*

And another night was over, and another day came. Kathie lay still and watched the light creep into her room, slowly and mournfully. 'If the sun shone I should go mad' she thought. 'Thank God that it is raining.' Suddenly she buried her face in the pillows. 'O God, O God, O God' she cried, and then 'No, you damned old hypocrite, I won't shout at you.' She laughed suddenly. 'Dear Mr Death, would you kindly send round a sheet this morning as there is a large parcel awaiting your convenience.' Then she lay with her face towards the window, and cried – hopelessly, madly. Long shudders passed through her. She grew icy cold – only her left hand under its bandages seemed to burn into her like a white hot iron. 'I shall go mad, mad, mad' she moaned. 'Hear me somebody. Is the whole place dead? Listen – damn you all – I'm ruined – and there the devils lie in their beds and dream and say "Never mind dear, you can always write." O the simpering brainless idiots. I shall commit suicide.'

She went through the whole scene again. The light in Leslie's eyes, the way his little hands had trembled when he showed her the great beautiful packet – all bought for two shillings, and most of them "double bangers". How they two had crept round to the dining [room] window and looked in and seen all the dull quiet faces, and had to put